

WAUKEGAN, ILL. – U.S. Representative Mark Kirk and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials today detailed ongoing cleanup efforts at the former site of the Soros/Outboard Marine Corporation (OMC) alongside Waukegan Harbor to remove threats to the health of Waukegan families.

“For years, the Outboard Marine Corporation quietly poisoned our community,” Congressman Kirk said. “After George Soros ran the company into bankruptcy and laid off its workforce, he left Waukegan as a polluted community along the Great Lakes. For the past eight years, I made it my priority to work with the EPA to remove this environmental threat along our lake. Today, we witnessed the progress made in removing deadly arsenic, cyanide and other chemicals that are trapped in the groundwater and soil. But we need to go further – we need to finish cleaning the harbor to spur an economic revival of northern Illinois. The redevelopment of Waukegan Harbor will remove a threat to human health and return tax revenue to support our schools.”

OMC used approximately eight million gallons of hydraulic fluid for die casting of engines. The fluid contained PolyChlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), which were dumped into Waukegan Harbor. Approximately 700,000 pounds of PCBs were present in the surrounding soil, and 300,000 pounds in the sediment of the harbor. In 1992, the EPA supervised a program eliminating 90 percent of this contamination. The final cleanup will remove the rest, opening the way for Waukegan to become one of the first harbors on the Great Lakes to be environmentally restored.

OMC also acquired a coke oven gas plant in the 1970s, and until 1983, used the facility for fire training. The site’s environmental concerns were discovered during the partial remediation of the harbor in the 1990s. Contaminants in the groundwater and soil from the plant include polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds, ammonia, arsenic, cyanide and heavy metals.

The coke plant soil cleanup was completed in November 2005. Groundwater pump and treatment is expected to start this summer. Active groundwater work will take place for approximately three to eight years at a total cost of \$28 million.

EPA also is cleaning the Soros/OMC Plant 2 in preparation of its destruction and redevelopment

of the surrounding land. The beach cleanup was completed in 2005 and a cooper cleanup in 2007. Asbestos and lead paint removal must occur before soil cleanup and building demolition. Groundwater cleanup under the site could begin as early as 2010. The State of Illinois is required to pay 10 percent of the cleanup costs.

The OMC site is part of the Waukegan “Area of Concern,” one of 26 Areas of Concern in the United States impairing human health and the environment. Total OMC site cleanup costs are estimated at \$130 million.